



**Improving Home Care Services in Ireland**  
**Have Your Say!**

**Easy Read Version**

## **Introduction**

The Government wants to improve home care services so people can live in their own homes for as long as possible.

You can help with this by answering the questions about home care services in this document. We would like you to tell us the good things about home care services in Ireland. We also want your ideas about how home care services could work better.

## **How to take part**

You can fill in the consultation online at: <http://health.gov.ie/consultations/>

If you prefer, you can download a copy of this document at <http://health.gov.ie/consultations/> and post it to us at:

Home Care Consultation  
Room 204  
Department of Health  
Hawkins House  
Hawkins Street  
Dublin 2, D02 VW90

Alternatively, if you would like a paper copy to be sent to you, please contact the Department of Health using the contact details written above or by calling (01) 6354402 or (01) 6354732.

You can also contact the Department at these phone numbers or at our email address ([homecareconsultation@health.gov.ie](mailto:homecareconsultation@health.gov.ie)) if you have any questions about this document.

## **Find out more**

You can read more about home care services and the Government's plans in a longer document called "Improving Home Care Services in Ireland – Have your Say!" It is available online at <http://health.gov.ie/consultations/> or we can post you a copy.

## **Closing date**

The last day you can send us your comments is 2 October 2017.

## **Freedom of Information**

Please note that submissions received by the Department are subject to the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2014 and may be released in response to an FOI request. You can contact the Department for more information on this.

## **Before you begin**

**Before you begin to answer the questions, you might find it helpful to read this section which has information about what home care is, who provides it, how to access it, and, why we need to change the way home care services work in Ireland.**

## **What is home care?**

Home care services provide help to people that need it so they can live in their own homes. For example, home care services help people to:

- Get washed and dressed
- Prepare food
- Use the toilet
- Do household chores

People may need home care services if they:

- Are older
- Have a disability
- Need help at home so that they don't have to move to a nursing home
- Need help at home after being in hospital

People who need help to live at home may be looked after by family, neighbours or friends. People may also be looked after by someone who is paid to look after them.

## **Who provides formal home care in Ireland?**

Formal home care is professional care paid for by the Health Service Executive (HSE), family members or the person receiving care.

Formal home care services are provided by the HSE, private companies and not-for-profit companies.

The HSE employs a range of staff to provide home care services. The HSE also pays other companies to provide services for people.

## **HSE Home Care Services**

The main home care services paid for and provided by the HSE are:

- Home help
- Home care packages
- Intensive home care packages

<b>HSE Home Care Services</b>	<b>About each service</b>
Home help	<p>The HSE home help service visits people to help with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal care (for example, washing, getting dressed, help at mealtimes);</li> <li>• Household chores (for example, lighting a fire or bringing in fuel, cleaning).</li> </ul>
Home care package	<p>Home care packages help people who need a higher level of support to live at home.</p> <p>The services provided in home care packages include more home help hours and can also include nursing and therapies such as speech and language therapy and physiotherapy.</p>
Intensive home care package	<p>Intensive home care packages are provided to people who need very high levels of care.</p> <p>These people could need extra help to be allowed home from hospital or to avoid moving to a nursing home.</p> <p>Intensive home care packages give a level of service that is over and above the services provided as part of a standard Home Care Package.</p>

We would like to hear your views about home help services, home care packages and intensive home care packages.

### **How to get home care services**

People who need home care can apply to the HSE for these services. HSE staff talk to the individual about their needs and the services that are available.

At the moment, there are no charges or means test for HSE funded home care services. You do not need a medical card to get home care services from the HSE.

The HSE cannot provide all of the home care services that people would like to receive. This means that people may have to wait for services or may not get all the services they would like to receive.

Many people purchase home care services directly from private companies.

### **Why do we need to change the way home care services work?**

People are living longer and the number of older people is increasing. People with disabilities are also living longer, more fulfilling lives. These are things to celebrate!

But, as people get older, they can need more support so that they can continue to live at home. We need to change the way home care services work to better meet these needs.

At the moment the way that the home care service works is different across the country. A new approach is needed so that the service is the same, no matter where you live.

It is also important that companies providing home care services have to follow the same rules and regulations.

We also want the home care services to work well with other services people need such as GPs, public health nursing, physiotherapy and occupational therapy.

## **YOUR DETAILS**

**In this section, we ask you to tell us a little about yourself so we can look at the responses received from different points of view. This is the only reason for collecting this information.**

**Your name (optional): If you would prefer to not give your name, please skip to the next question.**

**Title**

**First Name**

**Surname**

**What is your gender:**

Male

Female

Prefer not to say

**Your age:**

Under 40

40 – 59

60 – 69

70 – 79

80 – 89

90 +

Prefer not to say

**What county do you live in?**

**Of the list below, which best describes you: (you can select more than one)**

Someone who receives or has received home care

Family member or friend of someone who receives home care

Member of the public

An informal carer (not paid to provide care)

Home care worker

A health professional providing home care services

A health professional working in another sector

Prefer not to say

Other, please provide details \_\_\_\_\_

**(If you are NOT a home care worker or healthcare professional, please ignore the following two questions)**

**If you are a home care worker or a healthcare professional, please indicate what type of organisation you work in:**

- HSE
- Private Sector
- Voluntary/Not for Profit Sector

**If you are a home care worker or a healthcare professional, please indicate what service you work in:**

- Home care/home help
- Primary/community care and therapies
- Meals on Wheels
- Respite care
- None
- Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

## **YOUR EXPERIENCES**

**Have you ever received any of the following home care services? (You can select more than one):**

- Home Help
- Home Care Packages
- Intensive Home Care Packages
- None of the above

**Have you ever received any of the following services? (You can select more than one):**

- Meals on wheels
- Day centre
- Residential respite care
- Respite care in your home
- Therapies such as Occupational Therapy, Rehabilitation
- Public Health Nursing
- GP services
- Help from family, friends or neighbours
- None
- Other, please provide details \_\_\_\_\_

**Are you currently paying for private home care services?**

Yes  No  Prefer not to say

**If you are currently paying for private home care services, how many hours do you receive from the private provider each week?**

\_\_\_\_\_ hours

**Have you paid for private home care services in the past?**

Yes  No  Prefer not to say



**If you have or are currently paying for private home care, please state why:**

Did not know about HSE services

Applied to the HSE but was not approved

On a waiting list

Top up to HSE services/needed more hours

Prefer not to apply to the HSE

This question does not apply to me

Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

## **TELL US WHAT YOU THINK**

This section asks for your views about how home care currently works and your ideas for the future.

Here we are asking about **formal home care services**. By this we mean care that is provided by a professional and is paid for by the HSE, the person receiving home care or by family members.

In this section you will be asked to give your opinion on the different home care services, the strengths of the current home care system and what could be improved. This information will help the Department to decide what should stay the same and what needs to be done differently.

### **General Questions**

#### **1. In your opinion, what are the good things about home care services in Ireland?**

When giving your answer to this question, you may wish to think about the following:

- How you apply for home care
- How your need for home care services is assessed
- Who can access services
- What home care services are provided
- How home care services are provided
- How home care services are monitored
- How you can appeal a decision about your home care

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Question 2, 3 and 4 ask whether the different services that are needed to help people stay at home work well together. This information will help to inform how services can work better together in the future.

**2. Do you think that home care services work well alongside primary care and other community services to meet the needs of people who receive home care?**

Note: Primary and community services include GP services, public health nursing, physiotherapy, speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, and respite care.

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Do you think that home care services work well alongside hospitals to meet the needs of people who receive home care?**

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Do you think that home care services work well alongside informal carers to meet the needs of people who receive home care?**

Note: informal carers are family and friends that provide care and support

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

If you have any comments in relation to how well home care services work with other providers of care, please include them below:

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Questions 5 and 6 ask for your views in relation to choice of home care services and providers.

**5. Do you think that people who receive home care should have more of a say in the range of services that are provided to them?**

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Do you think that people who receive home care should have a choice in who provides their care?**

Note: Home care can be provided by the HSE, not-for-profit providers and private providers.

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

If you have any comments in relation to choice of home care services and providers, please include them below:

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**7. In your opinion, how could home care services in Ireland be improved?**

Note: When giving your answer to this question, you may wish to think about the following:

- How you apply for home care
- How your need for home care services is assessed
- Who can access services
- What home care services are provided
- How home care services are provided
- How home care services are monitored
- How you can appeal a decision about your home care

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**Questions on Information in relation to Home Care Services**

This section asks who you would contact if you needed information on home care services. It also asks whether you are aware of the tax relief that is available for privately purchased home care.

**8. If you, a relative or friend needed home care services, who would you ask for information first?**

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If you have any comments on this issue, please include them below:

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**9. Are you aware that tax relief is available to people that pay for home care services?**

Note: tax relief reduces the amount of tax that an individual has to pay.

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If you have any comments on this issue, please include them below:

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**Question on Standardisation**

At the moment, home care services operate in different ways across the country. This means that the amount and type of home care available can vary depending on where you live or the time of the year. Many other countries have home care systems that make sure that home care is provided in the same way across the country.

**10. Do you think that the same approaches should apply across the country in relation to the following?**

- How you apply for services Yes \_\_\_ No\_\_\_ Don't know\_\_\_
- How your need for services is assessed Yes \_\_\_ No\_\_\_ Don't know \_\_\_
- Who can access services Yes \_\_\_ No\_\_\_ Don't know \_\_\_
- What home care services are provided Yes \_\_\_ No\_\_\_ Don't know \_\_\_
- How home care services are provided Yes \_\_\_ No\_\_\_ Don't know \_\_\_
- How home care services are monitored Yes \_\_\_ No\_\_\_ Don't know \_\_\_
- How you can appeal a decision about your home care  
Yes \_\_\_ No\_\_\_ Don't know \_\_\_

If you have any comments on this issue, please include them below:

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**Question on Quality Standards**

At the moment, there are no national standards for home care. This means that the quality of home care can differ among home care providers. Other countries have introduced national standards. We would like to know your views on whether or not you think national quality standards should apply in the future to home care providers in Ireland.

Note: National standards would mean that every home care provider would have to meet a minimum standard of quality in order to continue providing home care services.

**11. Do you think that the same national quality standards should apply to all (public, private and not-for-profit voluntary) providers of home care?**

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

If you have any comments on this issue, please include them below:

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**Question on Training for Care Workers**

Currently, there is no minimum level of training required in order to be a home care worker in Ireland, though many have completed relevant training. Other countries have introduced minimum training levels in order to help ensure a better quality of service. We would like to know whether or not you think this would be a good idea for Ireland.

**12. Do you think that formal home care workers should have to complete a minimum level of training that would be set by the Government?**

Note: formal home care workers are people who are either self-employed or work for a home care service provider organisation

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

If you have any comments on this issue, please include them below:

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**Questions on Funding**

In Ireland, there is no means test for home care services that are funded by the HSE. People who receive these services do not have to pay for them. This is different to many other countries which have some form of charging or means test.

**13. Taking account of limited State resources, do you think that people who receive home care services should make a financial contribution to the cost, based on their ability to pay?**

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

If you have any comments on this issue, please include them below:

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**14. If the State could only provide a certain amount of home care services based on health need, would you be prepared to purchase additional hours with your own money, if you needed them?**

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

If you have any comments on this issue, please include them below:

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**Other issues**

**15. If there are any other comments that you would like to make, please include them below.**

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**Thank you for completing this consultation.**

**If you would like to receive a copy of the results of this consultation, please provide your postal or email address**

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